

Recitation C

Stress Can Save Our Lives

Is stress harmful? Should we reduce or avoid it? Well, not always. Surprisingly, stress can save our lives.

For example, stress is helpful in emergencies. When we face danger like a fire or a traffic accident, we feel threatened and our bodies release adrenaline. Hearts beat faster, breathing quickens, and muscles tighten. Blood vessels constrict to minimize any blood loss. The body also increases inflammation and mobilizes immune cells to heal us quickly. Unconsciously, we get ready to try to survive. Yes, stress can give us the power to survive! Scientists call this our “fight-or-flight” response.

Of course, if the response became chronic, we could grow older faster, and get sicker more easily. Frequent emergencies harm our health. But how often do we face dangerous situations? The problem is not that we occasionally get stressed, but that we think stress always harms us.

Stress is also useful in situations where we need to perform under pressure. For example, when we have an examination that decides our future, we often feel anxious or nervous. What can we do? Let’s recognize that we’re safe and change our anxiety into excitement, energy, or motivation. By doing this, our body will react differently. Blood flow will be maximized to give us the most possible energy. Our heart will beat not only faster, but stronger. We can now relax as if we were exercising. As a result, we can achieve our full potential on our exams! This wonderful response is called “a challenge response” by psychologists. Many professional athletes do this intentionally.

It’s a mistake to think that stress only does us harm. If we change our minds about stress, then we can use it to our advantage.

(283 words)